



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steven L. Beshear, Governor

Len Peters, Secretary

**CONTACT: Lynn Brammer
800-866-0555**

State Forester Leah MacSwords receives 2009 National Association of State Foresters Sustained Excellence Award

FRANKFORT, KY (Oct. 13, 2009) Listing the attributes of a leader in forestry would include words like: "leader, advocate, promoter, supporter, chair, co-chair, volunteer and participant." Or, you could just say 'Leah MacSwords.'

MacSwords received the Sustained Excellence Award at the 86th Annual National Association of State Foresters meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The award was presented by Bob Simpson, senior vice president, forestry, at the American Forest Foundation. This recognition, in the form of an annual award, honors state foresters who have been strong advocates and supporters for the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation.

"I am honored to receive this recognition from the American Tree Farm System, and I'm very proud of the work we do in Kentucky to support our tree farmers," MacSwords states. MacSwords' commitment to sustaining the Tree Farm Program provides the foundation for a sustained forest for present and future generations of forest landowners and their families.

MacSwords has served as the director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry for the past eight years. Throughout her tenure, she has been a strong and adamant supporter of the Kentucky Tree Farm Program, maintaining support for Tree Farm through her division that handles more than 95 percent of the state's tree farm reinspections.

As one to not only talk the talk, MacSwords is deeply involved with Tree Farm Committee leadership, as well as serving as an active member of the committee by participating in its meetings on a regular basis. Simpson said, "Without Leah, her leadership and her commitment to the Tree Farm program, we wouldn't be the largest and one of the most valued landowner groups in the country."

Tree Farm is part of the daily functions of the state Division of Forestry, due to MacSwords' leadership of, and belief in the Tree Farm Program. The division includes the Tree Farm display and information at numerous field days conducted throughout the year that involves cooperating with a number of agencies. The division helps to distribute Tree Farm information during the annual Kentucky Wood Expo and at the Kentucky Forest Industries Association Annual meeting.

MacSwords has instituted a policy to include Tree Farm brochures in all stewardship plans for landowners that the division works with throughout the state. In early 2009, MacSwords attended meetings on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design requirements for state buildings and was instrumental in getting parties together to see that state regulations were modified to allow certified Tree Farm wood to be given credit in the state approved system.

MacSwords is past head of the Southern State Foresters group and past president of the National Association of State Foresters where she continues to promote support for the Tree Farm program to her colleagues throughout the United States.

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) is a national program that promotes the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to private forest landowners. Founded in 1941, ATFS has 24 million certified acres of privately owned forestland and 91,000 family forest landowners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship. Family forest landowners manage their forestlands for wood, water, wildlife and recreation with assistance from 4,680 volunteer foresters.

ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit conservation and education organization that strives to ensure the sustainability of America's family forests for present and future generations. Our vision is to create a future where North American forests are sustained by the public which understands and values the social, economic and environmental benefits they provide to our communities, our nation and our world.